



Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Independence Status Evidence

You need to send evidence to prove your current status. Use the information below to find out what you need to send.

You should send **photocopies** of your evidence unless otherwise stated. We will return any original documents.

If on the first day of the first academic year of your course, you'll be:

e Receiving Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in your own name

You need to send us:

- your current benefits statement for 6 April 2025 to 5 April 2026; **or**
- your Tax Credit Award Notification for 6 April 2025 to 5 April 2026; **or**
- your Universal Credit Award Notification for 6 April 2025 to 5 April 2026.

e Responsible for a child

You need to send us:

- your most recent Child Benefit statement; **or**
- your child's **original** birth certificate.

e Currently a young person in custody/detention within the Youth Justice System

This could be in a Young Offender Institution (YOI), Secure Training Centre (STC) and/or Secure Children's Home (SCH).

You need to send us:

- a letter on headed paper from your key worker which must:
 - confirm your period and place of detention; **and**
 - confirm your nationality/residence details; **and**
 - confirm that you consent to your key worker to act on your behalf for the purposes of EMA; **and**
 - be signed and dated by both you and your key worker.



Living under the care of a Local Authority or foster parent(s)

If at any point from the age of 14 to the first day of the first academic year of your course you:

- have not been under the legal care of your parents for a combined total of at least 13 weeks; **or**
- were under a special guardianship order, in the custody or legal care of, or have been given accommodation by a Local Authority for at least 13 weeks.

If you returned to the legal care of your parents between the ages of 14 and 16 (before the start of your course), you may still be considered a care leaver.

You need to send us:

A letter from your Local Authority confirming your current address and whether you are, or have been, in care.

This letter must be on headed paper. It needs to be signed and dated by an authorised official from your Local Authority, with an official stamp.



I think I should be an independent student

If you've been advised to continue as a dependent student (i.e. you're financially dependent on your parent/guardian) but still consider yourself an independent student – call us on **0300 200 4050** to discuss your situation.